

Community Preservation Act

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Duxbury Clipper

Frequently Asked Questions About the Community Preservation Act

What growth pressures does Duxbury face?

Southeastern Massachusetts is now the fastest growing region in the Commonwealth. In addition, the Duxbury 1999 Comprehensive Plan projects an 80% increase in Duxbury's population in the future. Improved access to Duxbury with the Old Colony Railroad and the planned widening of Route 3 will make it an even more attractive town to live in. A depressed cranberry industry is forcing growers in the region to sell land for development. All of this is placing new pressures on Duxbury and will impact quality of life, the environment, tax rates and maintaining the Town's existing historical and "semi-rural" character.

What is the Community Preservation Act (CPA)?

A program that towns in Massachusetts can adopt to help balance growth by establishing a fund for the preservation of open space, wetlands, aquifers, farms, land for recreational use, historical buildings and affordable housing.

How would Duxbury benefit from it?

By taking these preservation steps, Duxbury could balance growth better in the future and

avoid many of the problems associated with overdevelopment, such as congestion, water quality issues, the loss of historical structures, limited recreational opportunities and higher taxes.

What will it cost?

The CPA would require a 3% property tax surcharge costing the median household \$120 per year. The State is providing matching funds through a \$25 million pool that will be shared by towns which participate in CPA.

How can the money be spent?

The CPA requires that 10% of the funds be spent in three areas: open space, historical and affordable housing. The remaining 70% can be spent in any of the three categories based on the preferences of the town.

How long would the CPA remain in effect?

The CPA requires a five-year commitment and thereafter is renewable on an annual basis.

How is the CPA implemented and how are projects approved?

The CPA requires the establishment of a CPA Committee which studies town needs and

makes recommendations annually on projects consistent with the objectives of the CPA. These projects are then brought to Town Meeting and are voted on by the citizens. All projects require Town Meeting approval before they can move forward.

Why adopt the CPA this year?

The state matching funds will be greatest for Towns that adopt the Act earliest. It is highly likely that this year the State would be matching Duxbury dollar for dollar. That means Duxbury would receive approximately \$800,000 in matching funds in the first year alone. As more towns adopt CPA the matching portion will decrease due to the \$25 million pool being shared between more towns.

What are the financial benefits to taxpayers with this program?

The CPA can benefit taxpayers financially in several ways:

- lower costs of land acquisition - matching funds from the State would make it less expensive for Duxbury to acquire land. The fund would also enable more cash purchases of land that would reduce interest charges to the town.

- increased property values - other towns that have implemented similar land banks have seen increases in property values by reducing the supply of developable land and making the town a more desirable place to live. These increases have offset the cost of the tax to the taxpayer.

- minimize long term taxes - by balancing growth better Duxbury would avoid some of the infrastructure costs associated in supporting a town with 80% more people.

Why is the CPA the best option for Duxbury?

The Land Acquisition Task Force was established by the Selectmen in May of last year to evaluate options for Duxbury regarding land acquisition consistent with the goals of the Town. After a six month study and evaluation of all of Duxbury's options, the Task Force recommended the CPA as the best option today for Duxbury for land acquisition. A copy of the Task Force's final report is available at the library or online at <http://duxburyfreelibrary.org>.

(FAQ written by members of Duxbury Citizens for Community Preservation)